

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2004

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, June 22, 2004 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

PRESENT

Thomas Owen, Roberto Allen, Charles Cresswell, Barbara Dezmon, Norman Gelman, John Hermina, Peter Lee, and Pamela Scarbro.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the May meeting were accepted as written.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Owen welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chairperson Owen also appreciated Commissioners changing their schedules to attend the meeting today.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Strategic Plan

Commissioners received copies of the Strategic Plan (See attached). Commissioner Gelman suggested that the plan be given to the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor in person. The plan should also be mailed to the Chairperson and committee members of the two budget hearing committees.

As a result of discussions regarding the strategic plan Commissioner Gelman will work along with the Public Affairs Coordinator to finalize the plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that submission of proposed legislation must be submitted in late August or early September.

Commissioner Dezmon inquired as to whether or not any MCHR offices would be closing as a result of budget cuts. The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Cambridge office will be closed.

MCHR will save about \$10,000 a year in closing the Cambridge office. The employee working in the Cambridge office will be moving to the Salisbury office. The employee in the Salisbury office will continue working in a part-time position vacated as a result of the retirement of an employee in the Baltimore office.

Community
Outreach/Education Unit
Hispanic Fair Housing
Awareness Campaign

Commissioners received copies of the Community Outreach/Education Unit Report (See attached). The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that MCHR is applying for a grant with HUD to conduct bilingual training to the Hispanic community regarding housing issues.

The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that there would be a hearing in reference to migrants obtaining driver licenses in Salisbury on June 28, 2004. All Commissioners are invited to attend.

The Public Affairs Coordinator will begin working on the Annual Report. When completed the report will be forward to Commissioners for review and comments.

Remedies Bill

Commissioner Gelman would like MCHR to decide whether to support an enhanced remedies bill. The Public Affairs Coordinator will forward a synopsis of the remedies bill to all Commissioners for review prior to meeting with the Governor's office. The remedies bill will be placed on the agenda for next month's meeting.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that MCHR received the HUD contract. There have been nationwide cuts in all HUD partnership initiative programs and enforcement funds.

The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that HUD is opening a training academy at the Howard University campus, in Washington, D.C. The academy will train and certify investigators.

The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that MCHR would probably receive an increase in the HUD contract by the end of the federal fiscal year. The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the Housing Testing Program would not be continued. Other agency staff will perform housing testing duties.

**ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Assistant Director's Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is 7 days from FY 2004 budget closing. MCHR will close the budget in the black.

Information Technology Commissioner Dezmon requested that the Hate Crimes Report be published on MCHR's website. The Information Technology Manager stated that the report is published on the Maryland State Police website. A link will be placed on MCHR's index page to the State Police report.

As a result of closing the Cambridge office the web directory will direct the public to the Salisbury office.

GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's report (See attached). MCHR received notice from state documents regarding the review of MCHR regulations. MCHR regulations are evaluated and any recommended changes have to be reviewed and approved.

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that the Md. State Bar Association Labor and Employment Newsletter has been published and copies were received by Commissioners (See attached). The newsletter contained articles written by agency staff. The General Counsel appreciated all agency staff's participation in writing the articles.

Commissioner Dezmon thanked and commended the General Counsel for all the assistance and interpretation of relevant issues before the Commission. Chairperson Owen would like to express the same.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Owen suggested that humanitarian awards or some kind of public recognition in Human Rights be given annually. Chairperson Owen motioned that an ad hoc committee be formed to work along with the Public Affairs Coordinator to carry out this venture. Members of this committee will be Martha Dickey, Tom Owen, Charles Cresswell and Barbara Dezmon.

July Commission Meeting Due to conflicts in schedules the July Commission meeting will be held on July 20 instead of July 13, 2004. The August meeting will be held on the second Tuesday as usual, August 10, 2004.

Commission meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Barbara Wilson

